

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 DEAE-00 CIAE-00
INR-10 IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 CTME-00 SNM-05
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O 160131Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8965
INFO AMCONSUL GUADALAJARA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL MAZATLAN IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL MONTERREY IMMEDIATE
ZEN ALL OTHER USCONS MEXICO POUCH

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FROM THE AMBASSADOR

EO: 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, MX
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS - PRESS GUIDANCE ON WITHDRAWAL OF
DEA FROM GOM ERADICATION PROGRAM

1. IN THE EVENT THERE ARE QUESTIONS FROM THE CONGRESS,
THE PRESS OR THE PUBLIC ABOUT DEA'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE
ERADICATION CAMPAIGN, I RECOMMEND THAT SPOKESMEN OF ALL
AGENCIES REPLY ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES.

2. QUESTION: WHY IS DEA NO LONGER PARTICIPATING IN
THE MEXICAN ERADICATION CAMPAIGN? ANSWER: FOR THE
PAST SEVERAL YEARS, DEA HAS PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO THE
CAMPAIGN IN THE FORM OF TDY PERSONNEL. DURING THE
CURRENT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT, THE
MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT IT HAS
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SUFFICIENT TRAINED PERSONNEL TO DO THE JOB AND HAS ASKED
THAT WE WITHDRAW THE TDY PERSONNEL. WE CONCURRED IN
THE MEXICAN ASSESSMENT AND THEREFORE TERMINATED THE
DEA/TDY PRESENCE.

3. QUESTION: HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED? ANSWER:
THIS DECISION AFFECTS ONLY ABOUT 20 DEA AGENTS AND

SUPPORT PERSONNEL SENT TO MEXICO ON TDY FOR PERIODS OF APPROXIMATELY 90 DAYS TWICE EACH YEAR.

4. QUESTION: HOW MANY DEA PEOPLE ARE ASSIGNED TO MEXICO? ANSWER (FOR BACKGROUND USE ONLY): DEA IS CURRENTLY AUTHORIZED 33 AGENT POSITIONS AND 25 SUPPORT POSITIONS IN MEXICO, FOR A TOTAL OF 58 POSITIONS. THEY ARE ASSIGNED TO THE EMBASSY AND TO FIVE OF THE NINE CONSULAR POSTS.

5. QUESTION: WHAT WERE THESE TDY PEOPLE DOING IN MEXICO? ANSWER: THEY SERVED AS SPOTTERS FLYING IN MEXICAN GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT TO HELP LOCATE ILLICIT POPPY FIELDS, WHICH THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD THEN KILL WITH HERBICIDES.

6. QUESTION: WITHOUT THESE DEA PEOPLE IN THE FIELD, HOW WILL WE KNOW WHETHER THE ASSISTANCE WE ARE GIVING THE MEXICANS FOR THE ERADICATION PROGRAM IS BEING PROPERLY UTILIZED? ANSWER: WE HAVE DETERMINED THAT THE EMBASSY HAS SUFFICIENT PERSONNEL IN THE FIELD TO KEEP US INFORMED OF THE PROGRESS OF THE MEXICAN ERADICATION PROGRAM. (COMMENT, FOR BACKGROUND USE: MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS PERMITTED JOURNALISTS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO VISIT ERADICATION OPERATIONS AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE THIS POLICY.)
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7. QUESTION : IN VIEW OF REPORTS THAT ERADICATION ACTIVITIES HAVE DECLINED SIGNIFICANTLY, ARE THE MEXICANS ASKING THE DEA PEOPLE TO LEAVE IN ORDER TO HIDE A POOR PERFORMANCE? ANSWER: NO. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT THE MEXICANS HAVE DESTROYED FEWER POPPY FIELDS IN 1978 THAN IN COMPARABLE PERIODS OF 1977, THERE ARE STRONG INDICATIONS THERE ARE FEWER POPPY FIELDS THIS YEAR. EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE MATTER AND WHO HAVE BEEN TO THE OPERATIONAL AREAS IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS ATTRIBUTE THIS DECLINE TO THE EFFECTS OF THE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN IN LATE 1977, TO THE INCREASED MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE POPPY-GROWING AREAS, AND TO UNUSUAL WEATHER CONDITIONS IN THE FORM OF ABNORMALLY COLD TEMPERATURES IN THE MOUNTAINS AND A PROTRACTED DROUGHT. LUCEY

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